

I unequivocally support RM-10811 keeping both Technician class levels codeless and placing a 5 wpm morse requirement for General class and a 12 wpm test for Extra class applicants.

Having been licensed in 1963 as a Novice, I am now an Advanced Class operator. I am also a retired Navy commander who has used morse at sea, reading morse signals sent from other vessels within our battle group by lamps. As amateur communicators, we must never lose the ability to maintain this form of communication.

It has been used by POWs to tap out messages between cells; it has been used by persons trapped in the wreckage of earthquake damaged buildings. Morse code is the most basic non-verbal form of communication.

While digital modes continue to become more sophisticated and equipment more complex, amateur radio operators must always maintain morse ability. When cell towers are blown down, the power goes out, a simple qrp rig and a key in a briefcase will always get the message out.

Five words per minute is not too much to ask of any individual of any age. Morse is a tool that will remain forever with a ham...like riding a bike. If an operator wants to graduate to the highest level in amateur radio -- Amateur Extra, 12 wpm is a simple demonstration of practical skill level with this most basic and practical art form.

I strongly urge the Commission to carefully consider this proposal and implement RM-10811 as proposed. Fully eliminating the morse requirement just because it's easier for some or because other countries are doing so, would be a disservice to a form of communication that should always be an essential tool for any communicator. Amateur radio is a privilege. Advancement within the ham radio community should require the learning of advanced theory and increased code speed ability. I applaud the Commission for establishing a non-code entry level amateur license, but I urge you to never totally exclude a code requirement as a most important communication skill for more advanced amateur operators.